

COMPETITION DRAWINGS, KING'S ROAD, READING.

SIR.—The letter which appeared in your number of the 15th instant, signed Fairplay, on the subject of the architectural competition for laying out ground in the King's-road, Reading, contains such distinct allusions to the part which was taken by me in the management of that competition, that I feel sure you will favour me by the insertion of these few remarks in your next number. And that the utmost fairness and attention may be given to Fairplay's strictures, it may be well to premise, that I was not previously aware that the decision of the designs had appeared to any person at all acquainted with the subject "to have produced any thing but satisfaction;" on the contrary, no such impression has been conveyed to me by any individual except by one of the competitors, who stated his opinion to be, that *his* were the only drawings that were in accordance with the instructions; unfortunately for that gentleman, his designs did not obtain a single vote from any other competitor. I do not, therefore, feel it incumbent upon me to say any thing in answer to that opinion, as it will occur to your readers, that towards those persons who have thought themselves right and all the rest of the world wrong, it is not usual to address the ordinary mode of reasoning, in order to convince them of the fallacy of their views. All other persons with whom I have communicated, have declared themselves perfectly satisfied with the adjudication of the premiums, and gratified that some scheme has been successfully adopted which could secure the advantage of competition without those evils which so generally accompany it.

To the first question then of your correspondent, "Was there any standard laid down for the judges to go upon?" he gives an answer in the same sentence, namely, "A set of rules was printed for the guidance of the competitors in preparing their designs, which, it is stated in the preamble, the proprietor will require to be adhered to by those who intend to compete." Again, he charges, that "two great mistakes appear to have been made by the promoter of this competition. In the first place a set of rules were printed, &c." Is this one of the mistakes that rules were printed for the guidance of the competitors? I would ask your correspondent what fair play there would have been in leaving every competitor to his own fancy in preparing his designs? I believe such directions are invariably adopted in fair competitions. What the other mistake is into which the promoter of this competition has fallen, your correspondent does not inform us.

Now with reference to the conditions in the set of rules referred to, no other answer is necessary than that those designs which were not in conformity with those conditions were rejected by the adjudicators, and the designs to which the premiums were awarded are strictly in accordance with the instructions. On this point all parties had an opportunity of satisfying themselves at the public exhibition of the designs at Reading; there were, I doubt not, many drawings at variance with the conditions, and as such, were very properly excluded from the premiums by the appointed judges.

It is quite true that several of the competitors did not attend to give their votes, but had their plans been chosen, of course they would not have received a premium; this I presume is the "distinction which ought to have been made, between those who complied with the rules and conditions, and those who did not." The calculation, however, of the number of those who did not attend at Reading to give their votes is very erroneously stated when it is computed at fourteen, for several of the competitors sent two or more designs, notwithstanding which they were permitted only to give one vote. The question in conclusion, "Where is the use of having rules printed for a competition if it is made optional with the competitors whether they abide by them or not, as has been done in the present instance?" scarcely needs the reply, reject the plans which are not in accordance with the conditions, and take care that the accepted ones are conformable thereto, as has been done in the present instance. I cannot think that the proposition of a set of questions, one of which should be "Whether such plans were in accordance with the printed instructions,"

would have given much more satisfaction: surely, I had no right to assume that the instructions would be unobserved while I had a reasonable ground for concluding that the adjudicators, from their personal interest in the competition, would take care not to lose sight of so important a feature in the claim to reward the designs. I cannot consider the publication of the votes as any breach of confidence, for as the name of the competitor is not attached to his motto, no competitor could know which is the motto of any other individual.

In conclusion, although "Fairplay" says his only object in addressing you is to state what he considers ought to have been the course adopted, yet he does not appear to be quite clear as to whether he would have submitted the drawings to the adjudicators or taken the matter in his own hands, had he been the proprietor of the land; but it has been my object to avoid the latter mode of awarding the premiums in the present instance, and until some more pertinent remarks than are made by your correspondent come under my notice, I see no reason to suppose that any thing besides universal satisfaction has been the result of this competition; and for the information of your readers, I have only to add (in direct contradiction to the statement of your anonymous correspondent, who would have shewn more fair play had he formed his own judgment on the plans), that the designs to which the premiums are awarded, are not "got up very elaborately, and tickled up so as to attract the eye," nor are the "buildings deeply back lined in dark lake colours, and the grounds all laid out in walks and beds of different colours," but as far as I am able to judge, they are in conformity with the instructions, which will be a sufficient reply also, to the letter signed "Veritas" in your last number.

I am, Sir, &c.,

J. J. BLANDY.

Reading, February 28th, 1845.

CUTTING AND POLISHING MARBLE.

SIR.—In THE BUILDER of the 8th February, your correspondent "J. H." (Pony-pool) inquires the materials used for polishing marble, &c. I have copied the following from page 601, of Dr. Ure's "Dictionary of Arts, Manufactures, and Mines," which may be useful to him.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

C. H. C.

"Cutting and polishing marble.—The marble saw is a thin plate of soft iron, continually supplied during its sawing motion with water and the sharpest sand. The sawing of moderate-sized pieces is performed by hand, but that of large slabs is most economically done by a proper mill.

"The first substance used in the polishing process is the sharpest sand, which must be worked with till the surface becomes perfectly flat. Then a second and a third sand of increasing fineness is to be applied. The next substance is emery, of progressive degrees of fineness; after which tripoli is employed; and the last polish is given with tin-putty." The body with which the sand is rubbed upon the marble is usually a plate of iron; but for the subsequent process, a plate of lead is used with fine sand and emery. The polishing rubbers are coarse linen cloths, or bagging, wedged tight into an iron planing-tool. In every step of the operation a constant trickling supply of water is required."

EVILS OF NEW LAWS.

SIR.—In the Times of February 24, 1845, there is a report of a cause in the Vice-Chancellor's Court (Elice v. Goodson), in which Sir Thomas Wilde makes some observations on a new law relating to the matter in question, which, I think, are particularly applicable to the Metropolitan Buildings Act.

Sir T. Wilde.—"Legislation on such a subject should have been as cautiously entered on as the repair of an old house; before a beam is removed, it should be ascertained what it supports. Under the old law we knew what we were about; but under the new law, to say the least, it is not so."

His Honour the Vice-Chancellor.—"Every one understood what was meant by the

• White Outside of Tin.

old actions, and yet they were abolished because they were actions, and a new fiction substituted."

This last, by changing the word "actions" into *faults*, will be quite pertinent, I believe, to the new Buildings Act; and I trust it will not be considered impertinent to say so, and to predict of it, "*Opera parit opus*."—I am, Sir, &c.,

PHILOCLARUS.

HERNE-HILL CHURCH.

SIR.—My attention has been directed to several letters which have appeared in your valuable publication relative to the contract of Herne-hill Church. The inconvenience attendant upon the assertion of ex-parte statements of this kind is so evident, that I am sure I need not enlarge upon it. With reference to the statements I have only to say they are untrue.—I am, Sir, &c.,

G. ALEXANDER.

6, Clement's-Inn, Strand,
March 11, 1845.

SIR.—Having been a clerk to Mr. Alexander at the time the estimates were made for Herne-hill Church, I beg to say that on Mr. Broomfield noticing the time was short that was allowed for their preparation, Mr. Alexander went himself to the Church Commissioners to get the time enlarged, which was not done. Mr. Broomfield then asked as a favour to be allowed to inspect Mr. Alexander's estimate, which was at first refused, but on Mr. B.'s again applying, Mr. Alexander remarked that as he understood that on the Great Western Railway contractors were allowed to see the engineers' quantities, he saw no objection to allow the inspection of his abstracts and dimension books to compare; but I distinctly told Mr. Broomfield that in no way would Mr. Alexander be responsible for the same, and Mr. Alexander also distinctly repeated the same to Mr. Broomfield. I am positive no alterations were made in the specification, of which a duplicate was lodged with the Church Commissioners, and could not doubt he seen; besides one of the builders tendering made a copy of the specification. As to the drawings, there was but one set, and there was no alteration made in them.

I am, Sir, &c.,

JOSEPH GIBBINS.

6, Portland-place, Hammersmith-gate,
March 11, 1845.

NEW CLAY FOR MODELLING.

SIR.—I have much satisfaction in bringing to your notice the discovery of a new clay, or conversion of an old clay, for the purpose of modelling, and which promises to be of essential service to the modeller, and may not be unimportant also to the builder.

In my paper read to the Society of Arts, on Wednesday last, March 5, "On the Construction of Models for Ethnographical Purposes," I have alluded to it, and at the same time produced some beautiful models in this clay by Mr. Sangiovanni, an artist who has made use of it with much success for some years past, and who has never found it to perish or crack, as is the case with clays in ordinary use.

It has all the appearance of hard stone or metal when oiled over the surface, and in this state is not affected by moisture.

Its component parts are of the ordinary clay of London and ground slate, in the proportion of three or four of the former to one of the latter. These must be well amalgamated till brought to a proper consistence for working.

I am, Sir, &c.,

EDWIN DALTON.

5, Fitzroy-street, Fitzroy-square,
March 10.

BLISTERS IN LIME.

SIR.—I have not seen the question of "H. S. S.," page 35 ante, fully replied to yet. Your query in the note must be answered doubtless in the negative.

The lime in question should have been run. I presume "H. S. S." to be neither a plasterer, nor a plasterer's labourer, or he would not have asked the question; I shall, therefore, explain the term run. The lime is put into a tub or cistern, water is then added as it slakes, until the whole is converted into thick paste or

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